OE FORM 6000, 2/69

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ERIC REPORT RESUME

ERIC ACC. NO.				IS DOCUMENT COPYRIGHTED? YES ☐ NO ☒
ED 039 393				ERIC REPRODUCTION RELEASE? YES ☐ NO ☒
CH ACC. NO.	P.A.	PUBL. DATE	ISSUE	LEVEL OF AVAILABILITY I ☒ II ☐ III ☐
AA 000 571		67	RIEOCT70	

AUTHOR
Kendrick, S. A.

TITLE
Rainy Monday.

SOURCE CODE	INSTITUTION (SOURCE)
QPX15900	College Entrance Examination Board, New York, N.Y.
SP. AG. CODE	SPONSORING AGENCY

EDRS PRICE	CONTRACT NO.	GRANT NO.
0.25;0.85		
REPORT NO.		BUREAU NO.

AVAILABILITY

JOURNAL CITATION

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE
15p.

DESCRIPTORS *Educational Testing; *College Entrance Examinations; *College Admission; *Admission Criteria; *Program Evaluation; College Curriculum; High School Curriculum; Language Tests; Test Reliability; Intelligence Tests; Competitive Selection; Aptitude Tests; Test Construction; Achievement Tests

IDENTIFIERS College Entrance Examination Board

ABSTRACT This article surveys the College Entrance Examination Board's future program, in a possible move toward establishment of a national secondary school curriculum. Attention is focused on the future content of tests and on their effects on young people. The existing program of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) and the way the program functions to improve relations between schools and colleges are examined. The article also traces the history of the CEEB, focusing on a quarter century of agitation in the last half of the nineteenth century which revolved around the diversity of entrance requirements of different colleges. In this context, the CEEB is held to have been created to bring order out of chaos and not to solve problems in the selection of students for admission. In particular, the paper disagrees with the holding of achievement tests in the month of December purely for the convenience of colleges. The problems and prospects for listening comprehension tests in modern languages are examined critically. (RJ)

GPO 870-390

ED 039 393

Rainy Monday

S. A. Kendrick
College Entrance Examination Board, ~~1967~~

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

AA 000 571

College Entrance Examination Board, 1967.

Rainy Monday

S. A. Kendrick

The College Board was officially organized on my birthday in the year my father was born. That is a Sign, I think -- and frankly tonight I need a Sign. I will accept astrological or any other available kind of justification for the fact that I am about to tell this particular group about the College Entrance Examination Board. Since you are mainly people who either know all about the Board or must be incapable of learning about it, I have addressed these remarks directly to Mr. Philip Abelson, whom I have not met before, on the grounds that, whatever the word "geophysical" may mean, we do not yet have an Achievement Test about it. If the rest of you insist upon nodding in, let us establish it as a convention of the evening that I am reminding you of things that, although you have heard them often before, may appropriately be brought up again as this Commission begins its work.

Aside from establishing my own mystical connections to the organization, the fact that the Board was founded 67 years ago means that it has by now a history -- or at least considerable experience. The paper sent to you as background for this meeting has directed you broadly and even grandly forward, with much attention to the future content of tests and to their effects on young people. Very properly, you have not been asked to be concerned with what is sometimes thought of as administrative detail. This is as it should be, but it would be a pity if, just once as you begin your work, you were not shown the Board program as it is seen by the employed staff on a rainy Monday morning in, say, February, and with some attention to the past.

I do not really intend to say very much about housekeeping. There is, though, a set of issues, often identified as primarily administrative, that lie somewhere between the daily routine comprehensible to a good civil servant from any field and the kinds of ultimate concerns to which you have already been directed. These issues have to do with the way people behave because there are tests and with the things that happen to tests because of the way people behave.

Taking an industrial or military view of college admissions as a personnel selection problem, and of the College Board as an agency providing services to what is strictly the admissions operation, it would, I think, be possible to conduct the examinations of the Board at half the cost and with perhaps one-tenth the people. If that were done, the entire enterprise would likely be brought down in a tidal wave of outrage by some of the brainest people in America. Taking one thing with another, it would not be a good thing, but it could be done. There are even those who suggest, without knowing it, that it should be done.

If the name of the organization were taken quite literally, I think the Scholastic Aptitude Test would be reduced in length to perhaps an hour or an hour and a half, leaving time in a single half day for the administration of short forms of those very few Achievement Tests that have direct and critical bearing on the admissions decision itself. Or, there might be other "aptitude" measures to include. The Achievement Tests would certainly include a test in advanced mathematics for the engineering colleges, and perhaps there would be a few others. But a student with a high SAT-verbal score who wanted to show what he could do in history would be told, if he were told anything at all, that no one doubted what

he could do in history if he put his mind to it, but that his high school transcript already revealed what he had done -- as far as it matters -- and God only knows what he would decide to do in the future -- therefore, no history test. There would certainly be no test of English Composition on the grounds that no one can tell when another person is writing really well, and that a student with a high verbal score either writes inoffensively already or he can be made to do so once he gets to college. I say "made to do so" rather than "taught to do so," and I think I am thoroughly justified.

If colleges protested that they had need for tests in foreign languages or other subjects for their own internal purposes or in order to encourage such study in schools, they would be told that this was the College Entrance Examination Board and that no doubt these separate concerns could be met at a suitable fee by a suitable agency.

The fact that the SAT would be a great deal shorter would mean that it would be less reliable, and the scores of individual candidates would tend to bounce around a good deal more than they do now. This would have no serious practical effect, since for every score that bounced down one would bounce up. Colleges that are not very selective would continue to accept most applicants and in fact would look at about the same kinds of numbers on score reports that they see now -- and would feel the same way about them. Colleges that are very selective would admit classes made up in some substantial part of different individuals, but the classes would probably be as good as they are now. The students whose scores bounced down would feel very bad, but, on the other hand, those whose scores bounced up would feel very good -- and the sum of all this emotion would come out in the official or central office view as zero, which is just where it is today.

Speaking of the central office view, you will realize that under this scheme there would be no regional offices at all and for that matter only a very small publications department and a mere wisp of guidance services. Students or schools or colleges or members of the general public who wanted to ask questions would be sent a printed card saying simply, "do not fold, spindle, or mutilate."

We would give up the curious practice of supporting the international program from ordinary revenue and turn to what we now know is the usual source of funds for such enterprises. As a matter of fact, that program, Advanced Placement, tests for the blind, and so forth would be recognized as having a cosmetic function only and would be tolerated as long as they made no trouble and found outside support.

But I think I had better cut this short. This suggestion is beginning to sound a good deal more attractive than I expected, and I did say that it would require only 10 percent of the staff.

The point is that such a program -- which does not exclude the possibility of new kinds of tests as they are invented -- is a leanly functional response to what perhaps most people regard as the primary activity of the organization, namely the assistance through testing of the decision-making process in college admissions. It ignores the ways people feel, of course. That fact, as I said in the beginning, would cause the program to be brought down, and it certainly would make the College Board a dull place to work. But perhaps the program would not be brought down. The subway is a dull place to work and, in New York at least, the public is rather continuously angry about it. Still it does move bodies from station to station, and so would this fantasy College Board program.

But it is apparent that the existing program is not like

the program I have just described, and the charge to this Commission is aimed at a future even more removed. It is partly through administrative or perhaps superadministrative considerations that the actual program has this different present character and that the nature of your charge is explained. There are probably dozens of these considerations, but I should like to give attention to three classes of them, each of which can be adorned with an Orwellian or perhaps it is a McLuhanian motto.

The first of these is that, as far as the membership is concerned, "form <u>is</u> function," and this has been true from the beginning. Put another way, the Board is an essentially administrative reform created to relieve discomfort in the relationship between schools and colleges and changing over the years to alleviate new discomforts as they arose. The membership tends to be moved emotionally by the form of the program because it is the form that is analgesic.

Consider the creation of the College Board. In the last half of the nineteenth century, college entrance requirements became so diverse and so idiosyncratic that secondary schools found it necessary to design the curriculum of virtually each pupil separately, depending on the college he hoped to attend. There was, in consequence, quite a quarter century of agitation, speeches, commissions, and reports and proposals from individual secondary schools, from the National Education Association, and notably from Charles W. Eliot (perhaps the biggest busybody in the history of education), joined later by Nicholas Murray Butler, himself not unenergetic.

This led, of course, to the formation of the College Board by the Association of the Middle States and Maryland under authorization given at a meeting at which both Eliot and Butler appeared as chief agitators. (It would be

fun to know how members of the Middle States Association really felt about Eliot, a New England college president, leading a floor fight for the establishment by the Middle States of an agency that his own college would not cooperate with for 4 years and would not fully support for 16.)

The most interesting thing about this quarter century of agitation is that no one ever mentioned a "selection ratio." It is not merely that they used better English in the nineteenth century, either. In all the reports, one never encounters the terms "admissions officer" (there were none), "multiple applications," "waiting lists," "rolling admissions," and certainly not that teen-age nice-nellyism, "college of his choice." Interestingly enough, there is not much mention of rejected students. The first Board examinations, given in June 1901, were marked so severely that more than 40 percent of the marks fell below the grade of 60 commonly taken as passing. This, however, was looked on with considerable pride as evidence that the new organization had gotten off to a good start in maintaining proper standards. There was no hint of college panic, of the traumatic effects of this experience, or of what one writer has recently called the "brutalizing" effect of the anxiety and failure experienced by applicants. There was, in other words, no college admissions problem in any terms that would make sense to us today, but there was a very considerable disorder in the administrative arrangements between the upper and lower schools.

The Board, then, was created to bring order and not to solve what we should regard as substantial issues in the selection of students. It did not spring from or support any ideology with respect to the curriculum. (I suspect that only the difficulties of getting organized kept the Board from offering examinations in blacksmithing, wood-

working, and chipping, filing, and fitting -- as Eliot's Harvard did that very year.) It did not propose to describe the kinds of young people whose talent should be nurtured in institutions of higher learning. It was to clear up the mess, and it did, and to some extent has continued doing the same to this very day, although the forces of messiness sometimes overbalance the resources of the Board.

I think a case can also be made that the adoptions of the Scholastic Aptitude Test in particular and of objective testing generally were also more a matter of convenient arrangement than responses to psychological or educational discovery. But I would rather use limited time for a less important and certainly less happy example.

The object of the Achievement Tests is to measure the accomplishment of high school students in learning material taught in high schools and organized within recognized disciplines. There are tests in chemistry, history, French, and so forth. It follows as the night the day that the tests, being organized to conform to high school teaching practice, will be administered on a schedule that will also accommodate the plain facts of the high school experience.

Now if one were to take the 12 months of the year and rate them one by one as to their suitability as a time for achievement testing, I have no doubt that there is one month that would be set at the very bottom of the list. It is too late for convenient recall of subjects studied the previous year, and it is too early for any reasonable accomplishment in the current year. Either of the months on either side of it would be better, and other months would be better still. It is December, and it is, of course, the month in which we do most of our achievement testing.

This curiosity came into being because some very selective colleges that depend on achievement tests in actual selection cannot get their work done early enough to compete with some less demanding institutions (and cannot satisfy public demands for instant decisions) unless they have Achievement Test scores by a date that requires testing in December. To the perfectly sensible statement that one cannot test achievement when students are six months removed from their junior courses and have just begun their senior ones, the answer has been simply "you must." And we have. But things must be done either to the tests or to the people if December testing is to be possible.

The Achievement Tests seem to me still to be rather good, but it is inescapably true that a commission taking a long view of the program a decade or so ago might have believed quite innocently that the question of achievement testing is a question of substance.

The second moral lesson I draw from the record is that in the testing program "means become ends." This is one statement I suppose of the recurrent psychological principle sometimes known as the functional autonomy of motives. But I refer to something partly different, namely that the establishment of a test to select students or to place them or to give them advanced placement, creates not merely a test but a polemical space, a tournament ground on which rather serious battles over such matters as the curriculum can be fought. It comes to be believed that if there is something wrong with schools or colleges, the wrong can be righted by changing the test that reflects the existing condition. Or at least it comes to be believed that if the tournament ground, the test, can be won entirely, it can form an excellent base for successful campaigns into the dark interiors of institutions. This rather confusingly reverses the previous observation that

administrative concerns control everything.

Let us consider for example the listening comprehension tests in modern languages.

During and just after World War II, and partly as a consequence of experience in the war, a group of modern language teachers began to agitate within the Modern Language Association and elsewhere for what is called "direct method" in the teaching of modern languages. Now the direct method develops what were originally known as oral-aural skills. But because language teachers have ears for language, these became known as audiolingual skills, proving that their ears are not perfect.

Naturally enough, these teacher-reformers noted immediately that the College Board tests in modern languages did not measure audiolingual skills, and they set up a very constructive clamor to have that changed. The imperfect but not useless result was that the Board was able to develop tests of listening comprehension in the major foreign languages.

These tests performed well, but it turned out that introducing them into the regular testing program would disrupt a thousand testing centers both here and abroad and would undoubtedly consume the Board's entire budget. Even then it couldn't be done. There was actually a master's thesis written on the problem at MIT, which found, among other things, that the most practical of all the impractical solutions available would probably interfere with transatlantic radio broadcasts in New Jersey. The Board therefore arranged that the tests be given in the supplementary testing program, which means essentially that if a school teaches by the direct method and therefore wants its students to have the listening comprehension test it can set up a supplementary center for this purpose and have the tests incorporated in scores reported to colleges.

Notice, though, that the colleges may not require that an applicant take this test. To many of us this seems an ideal solution, since students who are prepared for such a test can have it, while those who are not can avoid it. There is, I should say, a genuine, unemotional, rational difference of opinion among respectable language teachers as to the desirability of audiolingual skills as the objective of secondary school language instruction. There is no quarrel with the direct method if one wants to teach that sort of thing, but the argument is very fundamental and is, as I say, unresolved among the only people who can resolve it. Therefore the supplementary procedure of the Board seems ideal.

But the supplementary scheme did not seem ideal to the reformers, who said and say quite openly that if everyone can be <u>made</u> to take a listening comprehension test in French it can be shown that teachers who are single-minded about teaching the reading of French are accomplishing very little when it comes to the hearing of French. They are right about that, anyway.

This agitation has endured for 11 years to my own knowledge and shows no present signs of abatement. It is not an important issue, but it is an enlightening one. For, while the quarrel consumes a great deal of energy, attention, and moral fervor, it concerns something that cannot possibly affect college admissions. The quarrel is absurdly disproportionate to its importance, and yet it apparently will exist as long as we examine in modern languages at all, which is I think a point of interest for the Commission.

Or, for the ultimate triumph of principle over mere administration, consider the case of Greek. In the early fifties it was noticed that the number of candidates in the Achievement Test in Greek had dropped to something

like 30 and that for these 30 candidates the Board was printing a Greek test which was distributed to all the centers all over the world. As a matter of fact, the test was bound into the book given to all the candidates in all the centers all over the world. Someone -- a statistician no doubt -- therefore proposed that a committee be appointed to look into the regrettable possibility that the Greek test should be abandoned. The committee was appointed, deliberated for a year, and returned to advocate successfully that a scandal was imminent, in that the Board was not distinguishing between Attic and Homeric Greek and that rather than abandon the existing test we should immediately begin to offer <u>two</u> Greek tests. There was no opposition to this learned idea, possibly because no one could think what to say to these people. A rather grubby means had become a glorious end. The next year one of the two tests attracted, as I recall, 12 candidates, 5 of whom were <u>real Greeks</u>.

These illustrations are homely because they lend themselves to necessary brevity but also because all this was taking place while the Board was in a period of officially not influencing the curriculum. Of course, the Board has, in fact, been one of the many influences -- including textbook publishers, colleges, particular scholars, state departments of education, the Smith-Hughes Act, <u>The New York Times</u>, the Department of Labor of the federal government, the employment practices of major industry, and goodness knows what else -- that have had an increasing tendency to hold the curriculum somewhat together and even nationalize it in spite of a persistent tradition of local and even individual control of such matters. The actual influence of the Board in making for some degree of national consensus about the curriculum is quite unmeasured, but, regardless of current policy or past history,

it is apparent that a commission that proposes to study the tests of the future confronts almost at once their role as a battleground in the imminent war for a national secondary school curriculum.

It is, I think, no accident that one of the first, if not the first, open confrontations between the new educational establishment in Washington and the school administrators has come over the question of a national appraisal, or, in a word, a national test. There has been a good deal of disingenuous talk about not comparing people or schools, just as there was a good deal of disingenuous talk about federal aid and federal control, but I assume that the Commission is free to take up the possibility that whether it is conducted from the Office of the Commissioner of Education or from other places, there will be increasingly a tendency to measure academic achievement nationally. Well, the College Board is already a national agency, and I cannot imagine that if, as I believe, tests do become battlegrounds, the Board's future program will not be very heavily caught up in whatever struggle toward a national curriculum is taking place. The question for the Commission would seem to be, then, not only what kind of tests do you like, but, if tests are fighting spaces, what kind of fights do you like? For surely when you pick a test you pick a fight.

The final maxim I derive from the record states that "appearance is reality," or that things become what they seem. I mean that while tests are administrative arrangements and also are battlegrounds, they further are signals -- and very powerful ones to those who come near them. The difficulty is that the signal received is not necessarily the signal sent or intended.

A great deal is made of the alleged fact that teachers tend to "teach to" tests even when extensive efforts are

made to prevent this. This is regarded as improper or immoral according to the exuberance of the speaker, although lately some people have been saying that it is better to teach to a good test than a bad lesson plan. As a matter of fact, one small study done at Educational Testing Service turned up coincidentally the information that one group of teachers were teaching to a test that did not exist. They were receiving a signal that had never been sent.

As it happens, that study concerned an English test, and English tests are very powerful signals indeed. In fact, the testing of writing ability, nominally in the field of English, is a fine example of the tests as signal and the signal as trouble.

Now probably the SAT and the high school transcript together are rather adequate tests of the things that matter in admissions with respect to writing ability. They do not answer placement questions, they do not reform schools, and they do not punish naughty children or reward the white hats, but they serve the admissions function, and the English Composition Test and other Achievement Tests are there as lagniappes. It happens though that the signals sent by such an admissions battery are sour to practically everyone. The test or the combination is simply not a credible measure of writing ability, even if it is a good one. It also happens that the ultimate credible test simply cannot be made to do the measurement job, or at least it never has under real and reasonable conditions. This credible test, which requires that the students write for an hour on a subject such as "What is wrong with asking people to write about their summer vacations?", is the sort of thing that everyone likes in principle and no one likes in practice. The signal it sends and the associations it sets up (in principle) are so powerful and so

utterly charming that the Board has an insoluble problem in testing writing ability.

Of course nothing is insoluble if there must be a solution, so in this instance we have almost always had a placebo -- an instrument that gives all the subjective experiences of a test with none of the objective results. The current placebo is called the Writing Sample. It sits there pulsing out the news that the world has not entirely surrendered to hardware. (It happens that this particular placebo is administratively inconvenient, so I imagine it is doomed, but there will be another.)

In any case, tests are signals. There are signals that must be sent, and if a given program does not include them it must be modified until it does. Similarly all tests send signals, and these must not be wholly unacceptable. This has some considerable importance if one wants tests to endure, and particularly if one wants them to give information to human beings about themselves or others.

But I must stop. I have not told you of the time we scheduled the examinations for St. Patrick's Day; or the mother who drank her son's contact lenses just before the examination; or the scholar who tried to sneak dirty poems into the Latin examination; or the time we scheduled a make-up examination in Israel on a Saturday.

What is to be made of it all? I really haven't thought of that. As I said, this is just a parenthetical remark from a rainy Monday morning.